

SUPERB SOMERS DESTROYS WYCOMBE

By STUART EARP; Walton and H. 1, Wycombe W. 0

THE brilliance of Walton and Hersham's towering striker Keiron Somers destroyed any hopes of a Wycombe Wanderers' victory on Saturday. But although Walton deservedly took both points, it cost them dear, their midfield anchor man Dave Bassett being sent off in the 80th minute. There were problems too for Wycombe with Tony Amos and Rob Williams both ending up in the referee's notebook.

Bassett's dismissal for showing dissent at a booking brought the game back to life in the last ten minutes and Wanderers then mounted a furious assault on the home net which almost brought them a share of the Isthmian League points.

Walton, however, had done enough in the other 80 minutes and the man who did most of the damage was Somers. Taking on more responsibility since the six week suspension of Roger Connell, Somers gave Wycombe centre half, Gerry Olson, a thorough drubbing and the number of times Olson won their aerial duel could be counted on one hand.

From the second minute

when the tall Irishman soared above the Wycombe defence, it was obvious that the Blues were in for a hard time, and after dominating the first ten minutes they were always on the defensive.

For all their superiority, however, Walton could only break through once when Morris scored the deciding goal. Chances were created at both ends but a Wycombe equaliser looked highly unlikely until late in the game.

The Blues' front runners were never on top of the tough centre back combination of Dave Worby and Dave Donaldson.

Tony Amos, improving steadily recently, had an unhappy time for the whole 90 minutes while lightweights Mick Holfield and Tony Horseman were completely overpowered by the strong Walton rearguard.

Wanderers' main hopes came from midfield where Larry Pritchard and Johnny Hutchinson worked exceptionally hard. Hutch's left foot twice almost beat goalkeeper Richard Teale but for the most part, Wycombe raids were kept at long range.

With their midfield pair bolstering the defence in the first 10 minutes, Wycombe went forward smoothly with Horseman heading narrowly wide at the near post from Amos' corner. Willie Smith replied for Walton with a sweet move involving four players but controlled football was always difficult on a greasy surface.

Teale, who has had offers from Queens Park Rangers this season, turned one drive from Hutchinson into the side netting after a slip by Worby in the 12th minute but Walton were beginning to look increasingly dangerous, thanks to the ability of Somers.

Try as he may, Olson just couldn't find the solution to blot out the threat. Somers was always first to the ball, as were most of the Walton players, and he layed the ball off to fellow front runners Fosskett and Woffinden with monotonous regularity.

In the 25th minute Amos became the first player to enter referee K. Bray's notebook when he retaliated by fouling Donaldson after a crunching tackle. Four minutes later, Walton went ahead.

Inevitably it was Somers who made the goal. Demonstrating that he has ability on the ground as well as in the air, he raced up the touchline before cutting in to the edge of the box. A curling cross was met by Dave Morris who managed to get a touch to the ball and deflect it past a helpless John Maskell, making his return after an eight week absence through injury.

Strict marking by both sides brought a string of errors but Walton's distribution was far superior to Wycombe's who threw away far too much possession with poor passing. As a contrast the home defence

often set up dangerous raids whereas Wycombe were happy to boot the ball away to safety. The experience of injured skipper John Delaney was sadly missed.

Amos and Pritchard were both on target with pot shots from 20 yards before the interval, but Teale was never troubled and after 45 minutes Walton's unbeaten league record of 30 matches at home looked pretty safe. Ironically it was Wycombe who provided their last Isthmian defeat in March last year with a 2-1 victory.

The pattern of the first half continued in the second with Somers once again posing all sorts of problems to the Wycombe defence. He sent a looping header just wide in the 52nd minute before Hutchinson gave Wycombe their first reply two minutes later with another shot into the side netting.

After 56 minutes Wycombe were extremely fortunate not to go two down after an amazing goalmouth scramble. Somers beat Olson to a high cross and nodded the ball into the six yard box. Worby sent in two shots, the first blocked and the other

bundled away for a corner by Maskell amongst a haze of flying boots.

Rob Williams was booked for the third time this season in the 67th minute after a challenge in midfield. Williams had his name taken in the first two matches of this season — at Dulwich and Woking — but successfully appealed against one of them in October. He now has two against him and another could mean suspension.

Despite some occasional flashes from Wycombe, they were struggling to overcome the tall Walton defence until the 80th minute when Bassett received his marching orders.

Former Wanderer Bassett, a player in the Peter Storey mould, went too hard and too high in challenging Maskell and the referee reached for his book. After taking the Walton skipper's name, Bassett showed dissent at the decision and was dismissed. Maskell continued after treatment.

Down to ten men, Walton were really up against it in the final minutes as Wycombe sensed a chance of saving the game. The home side lost their "cool" at the back and Horseman almost exposed the defence but steered his header the wrong side of the upright.

On full time Olson's back header brought a brave save from Teale tipping the ball away for a corner but Walton just about held on to continue their present dominance over Wycombe.

WALTON: R. Teale, R. Thomas, D. Worby, D. Donaldson, W. Edwards, D. Bassett, D. Morris, W. Smith, C. Woffinden, K. Somers, C. Fosskett, sub: P. Wingate (not used).

WYCOMBE: J. Maskell, I. Rundle, R. Birdseye, R. Williams, G. Olson, A. Gane, M. Holfield, L. Pritchard, T. Horseman, J. Hutchinson, sub: D. Bullock (not used).

Referee: K. Bray.
Half time: 1-0.
Goalscorer: Walton — Morris (29).